

THE  
**PHILADELPHIA REGISTER,**  
AND  
**NATIONAL RECORDER.**

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**Internal Improvement.**

**COMMON SCHOOLS.**

*Annual Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools, to the Legislature of the State of New York.*

ALBANY, Feb. 17, 1819.

The superintendent of common schools respectfully reports:

That in making this his annual report, he is enabled to present to the legislature more satisfactory evidence of the great increase and prosperity of common schools than has, on any former occasion, been within his power. From the returns which have been made to him during the last year, an abstract of which is subjoined to this report, it appears, that in four hundred and two towns, from which only returns have been received, there are four thousand six hundred and fourteen common schools organized under the act for their establishment; and that in three thousand eight hundred and forty-four of these schools, from which, only, particular district returns have been received, there have been taught, during the last year, two hundred and ten thousand three hundred and sixteen children. There are one hundred and fifty-eight towns in the state from which no returns have been received; and many of the returns received from the other towns, are deficient in not stating the whole number of schools established, or the number of children taught in them. Allowing the towns from which no returns have been made, to have the same number of schools, in proportion to their population and extent, as other towns of equal extent and population, from which returns have been made, the whole number of common schools in the state, organized and permanently established under the act of the legislature, may be estimated at nearly six thousand; and the number of

children annually taught in them, in the various branches of elementary education, at nearly two hundred and fifty thousand.

This great increase and prosperity of our common schools, is evidently the result of the wise and liberal policy adopted by the legislature, for their encouragement and support. On comparing the returns of schools made for different years, since their first establishment by law, it appears that they have increased in a much greater ratio, than the increase of population; and that their condition, which was before stationary, has, under the salutary operation of the law for their establishment, been rapidly and substantially improved. From the earliest returns made under the act, it appears that the number of children taught was not more than four-fifths of the number between the ages of five and fifteen years. From subsequent returns it appears, that the children taught had increased to five-sixths of that number. But from the last returns it appears, that the number of children now taught is equal to seven-eighths of the number between the ages of five and fifteen years. From the same comparison it also appears, that the average length of time for which schools have been kept in each year, since their first establishment by law, has increased in about the same ratio as the number of children taught. The same data also affords evidence, that common schools have risen in public estimation, and received a degree of care and attention to their concerns corresponding with their increase and prosperity. If these results were the only evidence of a beneficial operation in the system of common schools provided by law, they would be sufficient to establish the public confidence in the policy of that system, and to secure to it a permanent duration. But it is well known, although it does not appear from any data in the returns, that the system has produced other results, not less in magnitude or merit. It has secured our schools against the admission of unquali-

fied teachers, by requiring them to submit to examination before a public board of inspectors, and to obtain from them a certificate of approbation, before they can legally be employed. It has imparted to common schools a new and more respectable character, by making them a subject of legal notice, and investing them with powers to regulate their own concerns. It has corrected many evils in the discipline and government of schools, not only by excluding unqualified teachers, but by subjecting the schools and course of studies in them, to the frequent inspection of public officers. It has founded schools in places where, by conflicting interests, or want of concert in the inhabitants, none had been before established; and it has, by its pecuniary aid, enabled many indigent children to receive the benefits of education, which would not otherwise have been within their reach. The system having already fulfilled so many of the beneficial ends of its institution, and it being now only six years since it was first organized and carried into operation, it is warrantable to infer, that all the expectations of its founders will, in due time, be realized.

The amount of public money received for the last year, in the schools from which returns have been made, is only \$93,010 54; but the whole amount received in all the schools, must have been \$120,000, besides the avails of local funds, consisting of gospel and school lots, belonging to many towns in the western district, and which, in some towns, have become so productive, as, together with the other public money received in those towns, to defray nearly all the expenses of their schools for the whole year. The difference between the amount of public money distributed, and the amount returned as having been received, is owing to the returns not being complete. When the amount of public money, to be distributed from the revenue of the school fund, shall be increased to \$70,000, as will be done for the ensuing year, the whole amount to be annually applied for the support of common schools, exclusive of local funds, will be \$140,000; which, when distributed among the different schools, will yield, on an average, to each one, a perpetual annuity of \$25. This sum, judiciously applied, will support a common school nearly two months in the year; which is about one-third of the time for which common schools, in many parts in the country, are ordinarily kept open. If the amount to be annually distributed from the school fund could be increased to \$106,000, it would, together with the amount raised by public tax, defray more than one-third of the expense of common schools for the whole state.

The propriety of consolidating the different acts on the subject of common schools into one act, and incorporating in it such amendments, as the experience of several years had suggested, was submitted to the legislature in the last annual report of the superintendent. The amendments then sug-

gested, with the reasons for adopting them, were fully explained in that report. By the experience of the last year, the propriety of those amendments has become more apparent: some of them are considered indispensable; particularly in relation to the mode of distributing the public money in cases where, by the division or alteration of counties, or from other causes, the exact population cannot be ascertained by the existing census. It is also considered important, as it would be a great relief to most persons having any charge in the affairs of common schools, that suitable forms and regulations for conducting all proceedings under the act, together with some general advice and direction as to the discipline of schools and course of studies to be pursued in them, should be published and distributed by authority of the legislature.

By the returns from the commissioners of school money in the city of New York, it will be seen that the share of money appropriated to some of the schools in that city, is more than sufficient to defray all their expenses, while the share of others is not sufficient for that purpose. It is respectfully submitted, whether the rule of distribution, prescribed by law, ought not to be so far altered, that no school shall receive more of the public money than is sufficient to defray its necessary expenses; and that where a surplus would be received by the existing rule of distribution, it shall be applied for the use of other schools, which by that rule, would receive less than they expended.

All which is respectfully submitted.

GIDEON HAWLEY,

*Superintendent of Common Schools.*

Whole number of school districts in said towns,	\$ 4,614
Amount of public money received in said districts during one year,	93,010
Whole number of children taught in said districts,	210,316
Number of children residing in said districts, between the ages of five and fifteen,	235,821
No returns were received from the counties of Cattaraugus, Richmond, Schenectady, Suffolk, and Tioga.	

## Communications.

*To the Editors of the Philadelphia Register.*

THE OBSERVER.—No. I.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

I am pleased with the style with which your paper is got up, and with the prospect of having a neat and portable volume at the end of the year containing a collection of valuable matter, that would otherwise be thrown away, or hang neglected in a cumbrous file of daily papers.

It will not be difficult, pursuing the plan you have adopted, to make it a record of interesting intelligence, without the insertion of original communications.—You must, however, expect some of your readers occasionally to feel the "*cacoe-thes scribendi*," and when circumstances will permit, it is hoped some of us will be indulged with the gratifying proof, that you have deemed our lucubrations worthy of being placed in the hands of your compositor.

The writer now asking a place in your columns, does not however conceive himself actuated by a mere itch for writing, or the selfish hope of feeding his vanity, by seeing himself "*in print*." If not mistaken in his own feelings, he has seriously at heart (in offering an intended series of essays, under the head he has assumed) objects, which he hopes will allow him to be placed as a feeble coadjutor in the field of philanthropy. The "Observer" has mixed a little with the crowds of human population in different parts of the world, and though his observations have been limited, and his peep at society but transient, compared with thousands much more able to profit by that little than himself, yet he has seen enough, often to have felt a most anxious solicitude to contribute a portion of the little strength he possesses, in lessening the weight of error and unhappiness which every where presses on so large a class of his fellow beings. But let it not be suspected that the "Observer" is inflated with the absurd idea of doing wonders in the columns of a weekly paper, by his attempts to lessen some of the sources of evil which harass society.—Nay, should he merely throw out some occasional reflections, which shall guard a few of his readers from the snares of ignorance and imposition, or suggest a hint to the minds of the intelligent and influential, which may sometimes ripen into active exertions in ameliorating the condition of any part of the human family, he will have reason to be satisfied; as he anticipates no other effects from his labours.

In censuring those things believed to be wrong and mischievous in their effects on society, it is the intention of the "Observer" to avoid, as much as possible, irritating personal feeling, by any expressions of contempt or indignation; or to

disgust his readers with a petulance of temper, which has too often sullied the language and defeated the objects of those who have had the best intentions, in their attempts to dispel error and promote reform. It may however occur, in the prosecution of the objects of the writer, that in attempting to guard the credulous and unsuspecting from becoming the prey of impostors, so rapidly multiplying in this age of puffing self-recommendation, his observations may be thought to have sometimes a personal application.—Be it so.—The pretensions of persons advertising themselves to the public, are open to public animadversion, and a dispassionate investigation of such pretension, it is conceived, is not out of place, when brought before the public through the same medium such advertisers choose for themselves. The same medium too, offers them the means of refuting any misrepresentations by which they may consider themselves aggrieved. With all the boasted liberty of the press in our country, we do not find (and perhaps it would not be reasonable to expect to find) that the editors of papers who are so liberally patronized by the puffing gentry, are very ready to give a place in their papers, to any communications which call in question the pretensions of these advertising impostors. "*Self-praise is no recommendation*," is an old maxim which every child has written in his copy-book for centuries past, and the truth of which always has been and ever will be verified by experience; yet do we still see every day evinced, by the columns of papers which are filled with self-recommendation, that there are quite enough of the credulous and unsuspecting for the impostor to fatten upon, who pay no regard to the maxim.

That such characters should receive the encouragement in this enlightened place, which their daily pertinacious claims upon the public prove they do, we can but think is a stain upon the character of our city, which the intelligence of its population ought to remove.

It would be easy to point out instances, where many, very many of our well meaning citizens have been vexatiously disappointed, and covered with shame and confusion, by having placed confidence in the promises of these igno-

rant self-praising pretenders, who have blazoned themselves forth in our gazettes, and it is hoped the "Observer" will not be thought ungraciously occupied, should he occasionally attempt to analyse their merits, in order to guard a part of the credulous multitude from again becoming the dupes of similar bare-faced impostors. As the "REGISTER" has no dependance for pecuniary aid upon the advertising patronage of this unworthy fraternity of puffers, we feel no hesitation in asking its aid, in holding up to public view the errors and mischiefs arising from such a source.

Amongst other subjects upon which the "Observer" has the intention of calling for the serious reflection of the philanthropists, the patriots, and the legislators of his country, there is one disastrous and predominant evil, to which he with every well wisher to humanity must be ardently desirous of seeing some practical and efficient remedy applied—he need not state, after having thus designated it, that this predominant vice is *Intemperance*, by which is meant *spirituous potation*. A widely spread and most calamitous evil, indeed!—which drives millions to the commission of every crime, that can be found on the black list of human depravity—which we see every where bringing distress and ruin upon so many dependent and helpless families, while it sends its debauched and beastly victims before arriving at the meridian of life to an untimely grave, the loathsome objects of disgust and aversion to all around them. The attention of the observing and reflecting part of the community has long been roused by the devastating effects every where observed of this mighty scourge. It does indeed call aloud, and with a voice which is awful, for prompt, vigorous and efficient means, to arrest its destructive and ruinous progress. The stability of our beloved republic calls for it; for upon virtue in the great mass of the people only, can we look with assurance for its permanent security: and do we not see this pillar of our hopes threatened to be laid waste by this foul destroyer of the sobriety, the reason, and the whole intellect of man? Who is unacquainted with the enormous consumption of *ardent spirits* in this country? The number of gallons actually ascertained to be

consumed is too frightful to be here enumerated. And is there no remedy? We trust there is—and may the blessing of God rest upon those who devise it. E.

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## SATURDAY SERMON.

No. 3.

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Souvent en s'attachant à des fantômes vains,  
Notre raison séduite avec plaisir s'égare;  
Elle même jouit des objets qu'elle feint,  
Et cette illusion pour quelque temps répare,  
Le défaut des vrais biens que la nature avare  
N'a pas accordé aux humains.

With airy phantoms bright and vain,  
Will Reason oft delighted stray,  
And love the bliss herself does feign,  
And those false joys awhile repay,  
The good upon life's real way,  
That Nature has denied in vain.

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I have sometimes, when under the influence of morbid indolence, thought it the part of wisdom to encourage those deceptions, which every one practises upon himself, by creating imaginary scenes of resolute virtue and unsullied happiness. If life be really full of care and sickness and sorrow, why should we wither our eyes by gazing upon it, when the fair fields of fancy are spread open before us, and the sounds of elysium invite our attention. There are many evils which our foresight cannot avert, nor our exertions mitigate; why then should we watch their slow and regular approach and suffer them to extend their baneful powers around them and to prey upon our vitals before they have actually reached us? Why should we not revel in all the bliss that imagination can procure us, and stand aloof from misery till the hard decree of necessity forces it upon us? We should thus not only avoid the unhappiness of anticipating those evils that do really befall us, but escape entirely the influence of those which appear to be directed at us, but which the hand of fate or the caprice of accident turns harmless aside.

There are many who are doomed to perpetual labour, and to care and affliction that never end. They are struggling forward through difficulties and dangers in pursuit of phantoms that allure the eye, but "turn to ashes in the grasp."

Why should these not endeavour to indemnify themselves for the "good that nature has denied," by the soothing of visionary comfort and the solace of imaginary enjoyment. The creations of fancy are not less substantial than the objects of sense. Half the possessions that men are so desirous of acquiring derive all their value from the "fantasy of the brain," and when viewed by sober reason, are of no more utility than the fleeting visions of sleep, or the idle phantoms of the waking dreamer. If the end of life be happiness, why should we not derive it immediately from the resources of our own minds, rather than abandon ourselves to the direction of external events, and suffer our peace to depend upon causes which we cannot control, and upon agents that are beyond our power.

By mixing in the bustle of the world, we are exposed to accidents which waste our lives, and to temptations which destroy our virtue; but from those scenes which we create for ourselves, we take away the follies and vices of our nature, and preserve a consistent and unwavering course of industry, order and purity. We paint ourselves as we wish we were, and our hearts are made firm by the constant contemplation of superior virtue.

In the regions of imagination the poor man may recompense himself for the frowns of fortune; he may withdraw from the calls of want, and contemplate himself surrounded by all the luxury of affluence, and while he views the fair creation, his better feelings prompt him to exclaim

"There shall my hand no stinted boon assign,  
To wretched hearts with sorrows such as mine."

The widow recalls to her presence the friend of her bosom, and forgets awhile that the immoveable gate of death presents a barrier to the renewal of that tender love and generous confidence, which had given to life all its brilliancy and happiness. The orphan beholds the mother who watched over his childhood with the fondest love, who anticipated his growth to manhood with sanguine and fervent hope, and who fell before he could reward her kindness by the solace of his ripened faculties and the protection of the arm of manhood. While his

heart is almost bursting at the thought that it is beyond his power to gladden that eye that always beamed on him with the fondest love, or to smooth that pillow that was often deserted to watch over him when the sweat of pain or the glow of fever was upon his restless head—he can turn awhile from the desolating reality, and see her loved form still hovering round him. The dull cold ear of death is again open to the voice of filial affection, and the eye rises from the heavy sleep of the grave to beam cheerfully and benignantly upon him.

If we view the subject in this light, it will appear that the reveries of imagination are a worthy occupation of our time, and that we may with propriety endeavour to free ourselves from the troubles of life, by turning our eyes from them.—But that this would destroy the order and prosperity of society needs no proof; and what is not good for all, can be good for none. I firmly believe that the path which has been marked out for man by the Almighty, is that in which he can enjoy most happiness himself and best promote that of others. When there appears to be any advantage in deviating from our duty, it becomes us to examine closely, and we will rarely fail to discover, that our happiness depends upon our obedience. This, however, we must not always expect to perceive. Even in the operations of men there are frequently reasons which do not at first appear; laws and customs sometimes seem absurd or iniquitous, for which, when better instructed, we may find a sufficient reason and an ample necessity. If we are incapable of seeing at once the designs of those who are governed by like passions as ourselves, how much more shall we be unable to comprehend the purposes of that Omniscient Being whose views extend through an infinite series of consequences and to a duration which to consider overwhelms us.

That we were created in order to be happy, is an opinion that must force itself with irresistible violence upon all who consider the Power that animates the earth. We cannot perceive what will most conduce to this end: the attainment of our wishes often brings disappointment and sorrow. But we know that Almighty wisdom will conduct us gradually through higher and happier

scenes of existence, to a state which our present sight cannot perceive, nor our present imaginations aspire to.

It is therefore our interest to act in accordance to what appears to be the will of the Great Spirit, even when our faculties are not able to discover the advantages to ourselves upon which that will is founded. We should apply our hearts and minds to resolute exertion, and cheerful acquiescence in the decrees of his providence, even when reason can shed no light upon them, and the star of faith is our only guide. In this instance such blind obedience is not required of us, for we can clearly perceive why man is destined to a life of labour.

If the calls of appetite and the necessities of life did not awaken us to toil, there is a principle in human nature that makes it necessary to our well being.—A long continuance in tranquil ease is impossible. Alternations of labour are necessary to enable us to enjoy rest. How far pain is requisite to the completion of our happiness, we cannot discover, for no one has ever been without it; but we all know that from exertion to avoid it arises all the happiness of life.

These pictures of fancy that rise so fresh before our eyes, would be deprived of all their attractions, if they were not preceded by that routine of worldly business which sometimes appears so dull and fatiguing. They are calculated to promote our good, not as enjoyments which terminate in themselves, but as incentives to that labour which, though it constitutes the real happiness of man, he always endeavours to avoid. If these visions are much indulged, the habit will insensibly grow upon us, and will withdraw our minds from the toil that is necessary to secure to us solid and lasting advantages. They will themselves become dull and wearisome, and we will find ourselves pursued by them when we wish to shake them off. When I was just emerging from boyhood, I was much accustomed to indulge these day-dreams, and have wilfully spent hours in arranging their fairy figures in a regular and connected form. I have reduced the shadowy beings that fleet before us, to form and shape, and have dwelt upon them, till satiated and wearied, I have wished for relief, without having the

courage to find employment to drive them away. The greatest evil arising from the indulgence of these reveries, is, that it disqualifies us for our necessary employments. It has on youthful minds the same effect that is produced by the highly wrought scenes of fictitious narrative—it creates a fastidious taste that rejects all practicable schemes of happiness—it destroys all benevolence, because the objects that require it are not sufficiently good—it deadens all exertion, because nothing is presented to reward it that is so dazzling as the achievements of the heroes of romance. Besides wholly destroying the time that is actually occupied, it spreads its lethargic influence over the soul and makes every thing lifeless and insipid. The active buoyancy of youth is exchanged for a sedateness which is not the result of thoughtfulness, and it not unfrequently happens, that those who were qualified to promote virtue and adorn life, become imbued with what has been called “the melancholy madness of poetry without its inspiration.”

Though it be true that most men in these ideal scenes represent themselves as acting under the influence of virtue, it cannot be allowed that they are thereby made better. The transient glow of generous feeling that is caused by them, will pass away in a few hours, unless it be preserved by active exercise; and when they have been long habitual, they are apt to produce indolent selfishness, and to take away that energy which is necessary to goodness.

This disease of the imagination is not confined to the young, but in youth it is most easily eradicated, and I therefore address myself particularly to the rising generation, and warn them as they value their reputation and happiness, to start early from their idle slumbers, and to find such employment as will make them wiser and better. At their first attempt to correct the exuberance of fancy, they will find themselves continually called back by some fair form or some melodious voice, but they must press forward without looking behind them. If they employ themselves in some active occupation, and resolutely refuse admission to these idle thoughts, a few days will render their further progress easy, and in a few weeks they will consider the

charm as broken. It will still however be necessary for some time to apply closely to realities, and to refuse ourselves the recreations of the imagination until we regain a state of intellectual health, and are no longer in danger of wresting to our hurt that faculty of the mind which cheers all human existence, and was given by our Maker as a means of calling all our powers into vigorous exercise.

YORICK.

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## News.

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[From the *Baltimore Fed. Republican*, Mar. 5.]

## SUMMARY.

Dec. 31.

ENGLAND.—Agricultural prospects cheerful; innumerable robberies during the fog; Monthly Reporter announces the general good health of the king—his malady unchanged; British foreign trade reviving—augmented one-third this last year; a valuable law book, the work of years, published, “A Systematical Arrangement of Coke upon Littleton;” the late queen’s horses are sold, averaging about 140 guineas a head; lord Castle-reagh, and the emperor Alexander, are pledged for the accession of Portugal to the general resolve for treating slave ships as pirates after 1820. We are declared to be miserably deficient in republican gratitude to our revolutionary defenders (general Starke for instance). Correspondence of Cobbett and Burdett seems to make a great noise.

Income of the consolidated fund for this year £12,130,000, increase of this last quarter about half a million. Net produce of the revenue of Great Britain.

## OFFICIAL STATEMENT.

Abstract of the net produce of the revenue of Great Britain, for the quarters ending 5th January, 1818 and 1819 respectively, exclusive of arrear of war duties.

	1818.	1819.
Customs	*13,017,621	2,465,664
Excise	5,499,672	6,238,040
Stamps	1,666,532	1,530,532
Post Office	319,000	319,000
Assessed taxes	2,260,017	2,303,778
Land taxes	353,604	408,366
Miscellaneous	*255,318	133,381
	113,271,764	13,398,761

The above is a cheering statement, upon which we take leave to congratulate the public.

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The crown jewels, so long missing, were found at Buckingham-house, Jan. 7th; no comments are made; the discovery was made by the prince regent. They were supposed to have been concealed by the king.

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Document—trial of Arbuthnot and Ambrister republished without comment on the 9th Jan. The total amount of the queen’s personal property is found to be about £140,000. This is an answer to all calumny. Of this, £50,000 are in jewels, presented to her on her marriage. Lord Ellenborough’s will is proved; his personal property is worth £200,000. The Courier, under the 11th Jan. after a long neutrality on the great question, has come out with the strongest testimony of horror and indignation against general Jackson, for the execution of Arbuthnot and Ambrister.

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These papers are full of complaints made by Englishmen, who have been enticed into the Spanish (republican) service; they suffer every hardship, cruelty and disappointment. Under the 15th, the Courier gives the arguments of our National Intelligencer in defence of Jackson’s proceedings. That is entirely fair. It is succeeded with an extract from our paper, of the 11th December, which may be thought quite as *unfair* by others.

Jan. 21.

The new parliament had commenced operations.

The first letter of Algernon Sydney has been republished in the Traveller, London; it occupies four columns. We are not sorry to see it—it is honourable to our country. That writer is one among the few who have stood forward to defend their country against the reproach of countenancing military despotism, as sanguinary and horrible as any that ever stained the records of history. Mr. Coleridge is continuing his lectures. There has also another literary phenomenon appeared—A Mr. Bodbeck has returned from the interior of Africa, after a six months’ residence, with a geographical account of the country.

## Public Affairs.

### Pennsylvania Legislature

#### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES.

*March 5.*—Mr. Lehman rose to make a motion, that he thought required some prefatory remarks. It was well known, that so early as the year 1786, with a view to the internal improvement of the state, commissioners were appointed by the supreme executive council to explore the navigable waters, ascertain levels, &c. Since the adoption of the present constitution, every governor had recommended the subject to the attention of the legislature, and the present governor particularly had recommended it in strong terms (which Mr. L. read from the message to the legislature at the opening of the present session). Recommendations such as this had at all times met the approbation of men in high official stations and private citizens of enlightened minds, however they might differ on political subjects; and all joined in regretting that they had not been carried into effect.—Mr. L. adverted to the importance of connecting lake Erie with the Delaware, by means of the highest navigable waters of the Susquehannah and Ohio. But he said, there was no official document to shew the elevation between these points, and so there was nothing from which the practicability or the expense of connecting the waters was to be ascertained. The natural channel of trade from the east to the west lay through Pennsylvania, but unless some measures were adopted to cheapen the conveyance of merchandize and the products of the soil, the trade would take its course to the north or to the south of us. This (cheapening) was not to be done unless the necessary facts were first ascertained, and, without involving the state in much expense, data of the most important kind could be furnished. A bill on their files made provision for the appointment of commissioners to explore the country, and providing funds, &c. If the house did not think proper at this time to appropriate the funds, that part of the bill might be stricken out, and commissioners only appointed. He then moved that the house would proceed to consider the bill, "for the appointment of a board of commissioners and pledging funds for internal improvement."

The house agreed to consider the bill.

Mr. Lehman moved to strike out of the first section, that which related to the appointment of commissioners in the bill, and insert other words empowering the governor to appoint them.

Mr. Thackara was opposed to the plan altogether.—If commissioners should be appointed, they would make very pretty reports, but nothing would be done. The members of that house, coming from all parts of

the state, were much better qualified to judge of the proper plans of improvement than any commissioners could be. Let the legislature agree upon given points, and then appropriate certain funds—say the auction duties, to connect them.

Mr. Lehman spoke in answer, and Mr. Thackara replied.

Mr. Coulter opposed the amendment, as it added to the already too great patronage of the governor.

The amendment was negatived.

Mr. Lehman then named Samuel Mifflin as one of the commissioners, Mr. Coulter named Mr. Freidt, Mr. Gilmore named John Hall, Mr. Reeder named Isaac A. Chapman.

After further debate, the first and second sections were postponed indefinitely.

#### *An Act in addition to the Acts prohibiting the Slave Trade.*

Sect. 1. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the U. S. of America, in Congress assembled, That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby authorised, whenever he shall deem it expedient, to cause any of the armed vessels of the United States to be employed to cruise on any of the coasts of the United States, or territories thereof, or of the coasts of Africa, or elsewhere, where he may judge attempts may be made to carry on the slave trade by citizens or residents of the United States, in contravention of the acts of Congress prohibiting the same, and to instruct and direct the commanders of all armed vessels of the United States, to seize, take, and bring into any port of the United States, all ships or vessels of the United States, wheresoever found, which may have taken on board, or which may be intended for the purpose of taking on board, or of transporting, or may have transported, any negro, mulatto, or person of colour, in violation of any of the provisions of the act, entitled "An act in addition to an act to prohibit the importation of slaves into any port or place within the jurisdiction of the United States, from and after the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eight, and to repeal certain parts of the same," or of any other act or acts prohibiting the traffic in slaves, to be proceeded against according to law: And the proceeds of all ships and vessels, their tackle, apparel, and furniture, and the goods and effects on board of them, which shall be so seized, prosecuted and condemned, shall be divided equally between the United States and the officers and men who shall seize, take or bring the same into port for condemnation, whether such seizure be made by an armed vessel of the United States or revenue cutter thereof: And the same shall be distributed in like manner as is provided by law for the distribution of prizes taken from an enemy. *Provided*, That the officers and men to be en-

titled to one half of the proceeds aforesaid, shall safe keep every negro, mulatto, or person of colour, found on board of any ship or vessel so seized, taken, or brought into port, for condemnation, and shall deliver every such negro, mulatto, or person of colour, to the marshal of the district into which they are brought, if into a port of the United States, or, if elsewhere, to such person or persons as shall be lawfully appointed by the President of the United States, in the manner hereinafter directed, transmitting to the President of the United States, as soon as may be after such delivery, a descriptive list of such negroes, mulattoes, or persons of colour, that he may give directions for the disposal of them. *And provided further*, that the commanders of such commissioned vessels, do cause to be apprehended, and taken into custody, every person found on board of such vessel, so seized and taken, being of the officers or crew thereof, and him or them convey, as soon as conveniently may be, to the civil authority of the United States, to be proceeded against, in due course of law, in some of the districts thereof.

Sect. 2. *And be it further enacted*, That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby authorised to make such regulations and arrangements, as he may deem expedient, for the safe keeping, support, and removal beyond the limits of the United States, of all such negroes, mulattoes, or persons of colour, as may be so delivered and brought within their jurisdiction: And to appoint a proper person or persons, residing upon the coast of Africa, as agent or agents, for receiving the negroes, mulattoes, or persons of colour, delivered from on board vessels seized in the prosecution of the slave trade, by commanders of the United States armed vessels.

Sect. 3. *And be it further enacted*, That a bounty of twenty-five dollars be paid to the officers and crews of the commissioned vessels of the United States, or revenue cutters, for each and every negro, mulatto, or person of colour, who shall have been as hereinbefore provided, delivered to the marshal or agent duly appointed to receive them: And the secretary of the treasury is hereby authorised and required to pay, or cause to be paid, to such officers and crews, or their agent, the aforesaid bounty, for each person delivered as aforesaid.

Sect. 4. *And be it further enacted*, That when any citizen, or other person, shall lodge information, with the attorney for the district of any state or territory, as the case may be, that any negro, mulatto, or person of colour, has been imported therein, contrary to the provisions of the acts in such case made and provided, it shall be the duty of the said attorney forthwith to commence a prosecution, by information; and process shall issue against the person charged with holding such negro, negroes, mulatto, mulattoes, person or persons of colour, so alleged to be imported contrary to the provisions of the acts aforesaid: And if, upon the return of the process exe-

cuted, it shall be ascertained, by the verdict of a jury, that such negro, negroes, mulatto, mulattoes, person or persons of colour, have been brought in, contrary to the true intent and meaning of the acts in such cases made and provided, then the court shall direct the marshal of the said district to take the said negroes, mulattoes, or persons of colour into his custody, for safekeeping, subject to the orders of the President of the United States; and the informer or informers, who shall have lodged the information, shall be entitled to receive, over and above the proportion of the penalties accruing to him or them by the provisions of the acts in such case made and provided, a bounty of fifty dollars for each and every negro, mulatto, or person of colour, who shall have been delivered into the custody of the marshal; and the secretary of the treasury is hereby authorised and required to pay, or cause to be paid, the aforesaid bounty, upon the certificate of the clerk of the court for the district where the prosecution may have been had, with the seal of office thereto annexed, stating the number of negroes, mulattoes, or persons of colour so delivered.

Sect. 5. *And be it further enacted*, That it shall be the duty of the commander of any armed vessel of the United States, whenever he shall make any capture under the provisions of this act, to bring the vessel and her cargo, for adjudication into some of the ports of the state or territory to which such vessel, so captured, shall belong, if he can ascertain the same; if not, then to be sent into any convenient port of the United States.

Sect. 6. *And be it further enacted*, That all such acts, or parts of acts as may be repugnant to the provisions of this act, shall be, and the same are hereby repealed.

Sect. 7. *And be it further enacted*, That a sum, not exceeding one hundred thousand dollars, be, and the same is hereby, appropriated to carry this law into effect.

H. CLAY,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.

JAMES BARBOUR,

President of the Senate, pro tempore.

March 3d, 1819—Approved,

JAMES MONROE.

[FROM THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.]

#### STATE INSOLVENT LAWS.

Great interest having been excited respecting the recent decisions of the supreme court on the subject of the State Bankrupt and Insolvent Laws, we have obtained a statement of the points decided by the court, the accuracy of which may be depended on, and which we now lay before our readers. The opinions at large, with the cases, and the argument of counsel, will very soon appear in the 4th volume of Mr. Wheaton's Reports. It would be obviously impossible to include all these in

the compass of a newspaper; and we have, therefore limited ourselves to a brief analysis of the opinions of the court.

The first case on this subject which was heard and determined by the court, was that of *Sturges* against *Crowninshield*. This was an action of assumpsit against the defendant as promissor upon two promissory notes, both dated at New York, 22d March, 1811, for the sum of \$771 86 each, and payable to the plaintiff, one on the 1st of August, and the other on the 15th of August, 1811. The defendant pleaded his discharge under "an act for the benefit of insolvent debtors and their creditors," passed by the legislature of New York, the 3d day of April, 1811. After stating the provisions of the act, the defendant's plea averred his compliance with them, and that he was discharged, and a certificate given to him the — day of —, 1812.

To this plea there was a general demurrer and joinder. At the October term of the circuit court, 1817, this cause came on to be argued and heard on the demurrer, and the following questions arose, viz :

1. Whether, since the adoption of the constitution of the United States, any state has authority to pass a bankrupt law, or whether the power is exclusively vested in the Congress of the United States?

2. Whether the act of New York, passed the 3d day of April, 1811, and stated in the plea in this case, is a bankrupt act within the meaning of the constitution of the United States?

3. Whether the act aforesaid is an act or law impairing the obligation of contracts, within the meaning of the constitution of the United States?

4. Whether the plea is a good and sufficient bar of the plaintiff's action?

And, after hearing counsel upon the questions, the judges of the circuit court were opposed in opinion thereupon; and, upon motion of the plaintiff's counsel, the questions were certified to the supreme court for their final decision.

On the first question, the supreme court were of opinion, that, until the power, contained in the constitution of the U. States, to pass uniform laws throughout the union, on the subject of bankruptcies, be exercised by Congress, the states have authority to pass a bankrupt law, provided such law contains no principle violating the 10th section of the 1st article of the constitution of the U. States, which declares that "no state shall pass any law impairing the obligation of contracts."

This opinion, of course, rendered it unnecessary to consider the 2d question.

On the 3d question, the Court were of opinion, that the act of New-York, which was pleaded in this case, (and which not only liberates the person of the debtor, but discharges him from all liability for any debt previously contracted, on his surrendering his property in the manner it prescribes,) is

an act or law impairing the obligation of contracts within the meaning of the 10th section of the 1st article of the constitution of the United States. In delivering the judgment of the court, the Chief Justice stated, that, as to what was intended by the framers of the constitution when they used the terms, "*any law impairing the obligation of contracts*," it would seem difficult to substitute words which are more intelligible, or less liable to misconstruction. A contract is an agreement in which a party undertakes to do or not to do a particular thing. The law binds him to perform his undertaking, and this is, of course, the obligation of a contract. In the case at bar, the defendant had given his promissory note to pay the plaintiff a sum of money on or before a certain day. The contract binds him to pay that sum on that day, and this is its obligation. Any law which releases a part of this obligation, must, in the literary sense of the word, *impair* it. Much more must a law impair it, which makes it totally invalid, and entirely discharges it.

It was not necessary, nor would it have been safe, for the framers of the constitution to enumerate particular objects to which the principle they intended to establish should apply. The principle was *the inviolability of contracts*. This principle was to be protected in whatever form it might be assailed. To what purpose should the convention enumerate the particular *modes of violation*, which should be forbidden, when it was intended to forbid *all*? Had an enumeration of all the laws which might violate contracts been attempted, the provision must have been less complete, and involved in more perplexity than it now is. The plain and simple declaration, that no state shall pass *any law* impairing the obligation of contracts, includes insolvent laws, and all other laws, so far as they infringe the principle the convention intended to hold sacred, and no farther. But the convention did not intend to prohibit the passage of *all* insolvent laws. To punish honest insolvency by imprisonment for life, and to make this a constitutional principle, would be an excess of inhumanity, which would not readily be imputed to the illustrious patriots who framed our constitution, or to the people who adopted it. The distinction between the *obligation* of a contract, and the *remedy* given by the legislature to enforce that obligation, exists in the nature of things. The remedy may be modified as the legislative wisdom shall direct, without impairing the obligation of the contract. Confinement of the debtor may be a punishment for not performing his contract, or may be allowed as a means of inducing him to perform it. But the state may refuse to inflict this punishment, or may withhold this means, and leave the contract in full force. Imprisonment is no part of the contract, and simply to relieve the prisoner, does not impair its obligation.

The court also intimated that it had been contended at the bar, that this construction of the constitution would extend to statutes of limitation and laws against usury. The court *did not think so*. Statutes of limitation relate to the remedies which are furnished in the courts. They rather establish that certain circumstances shall amount to evidence that a contract has been performed, than dispense with its performance. But, if in a state, where six years may be pleaded in bar to an action of assumpsit, a law should be passed declaring that contracts already in existence, and not barred by the statute, should be construed to be within it, there would be little doubt of its unconstitutionality. So with respect to the laws against usury. If the law be that no person shall take more than 6 per cent. per annum for the use of money, or that if more be reserved, the contract shall be void, a contract made thereafter, reserving 7 per cent. would have no obligation in its commencement. But, if a law should declare that contracts already entered into and reserving the legal interest should be usurious and void, either in the whole or in part, it would impair the obligation of the contract, and would be clearly unconstitutional.

The court stated that this opinion was confined to the case actually under consideration. It was confined to a case in which a creditor sues in a court, the proceedings of which, the legislature, whose act is pleaded in bar, had not a right to control: and to a case where the creditor had not proceeded to execution against the body of his debtor within the state whose law attempts to absolve a confined insolvent debtor from his obligation. When such a case should arise, it would be considered.

Of course the 4th question was resolved in the negative.

The next case which came on for argument on this subject, was that of McMillan against McNeill. In this case the debt was contracted in the year 1813, in the state of South Carolina, both the parties then residing there. The debtor removed to Louisiana, and obtained his discharge in 1815, under the insolvent act of that state passed in 1808. In 1817 a suit was commenced against him, by the creditor, in the district court of Louisiana. The discharge under the law of that state was pleaded in bar; the plea was determined to be insufficient; judgment was rendered for the plaintiff; and the case was brought, by writ of error, before the Supreme Court of the United States.

The court determined that the case was not distinguishable, in principle, from that of Sturges against Crowninshield; that the law of Louisiana, so far as it purported to discharge the debt, was unconstitutional; and that the circumstance of the debt being contracted subsequent to the passage of the law by which it was attempted to be discharged, made no difference in the application of the principle.

## Miscellany.

### COLONEL TATHAM.

[Most of our readers have seen the account of Col. Tatham's death, which he caused by throwing himself before a cannon at the instant it was fired, during the celebration of the birth day of Washington at Richmond.]

*From the Richmond Enquirer.*

The following sketch of this unfortunate and ingenious gentleman was drawn by himself a few days before his death, and addressed to a member of the senate of Virginia. We present it as an article of much curious interest to our readers. It is now ascertained that colonel T. *intended* the act of self-destruction, and had spoken but a few days before his death of his intention to destroy himself, in the face of the public, on the very scene of his death, the Capitol Square!

*Dear Sir*—In compliance with your request of yesterday, I have the honour to state, that I was born in England on the 13th April, (N. S.) 1752. My family and connexions are certified under the seal of this commonwealth, in the testimonial of the honourable Thomas Nelson, last secretary of state in Virginia, filed in the papers transmitted for the inspection of your honourable committee, if needful.

In the autumn of 1768 my father sent me from school to Liverpool, thence to be sent to Messrs. Carter & Trent, native American merchants, on James river, to be brought up in the commercial pursuits of the tobacco trade.

On my birth day, in 1769, I arrived in Virginia, and was immediately received into their employ, serving them faithfully several years, and being in their confidence, intercourse, and connexion, till their death. This year I became intimate with your grandfather and father.

I was forbidden by my family to take part with the Americans; but my own opinion of national rights preponderating, I joined Garland's volunteers, in Lunenburg, Va. but was not in action with them at the battle of the Great Bridge, (Norfolk,) on account of my return from Petersburg to Lunenburg, on important business, under orders verbally.

In April, 1776, and thereafter through the revolutionary war, I was in the first action fought with Indians, and in the storm of the enemy's left famous rock redoubt at the siege of York—with the marquis de la Fayette, general Muhlenburg, &c.—See testimonials in my files, for my general conduct, attested.

At the close of the revolution, under general Washington's farewell advice to the army, I became a member of the bar, with a practice of \$8000 per annum; and the representative of my county in the legislature of North Carolina.

In 1783, family concerns (wherein I found a trick concerning the statute of limitations) induced me to go to England; after eleven months absence, I arrived in Norfolk in an indifferent state of health, and although I found some of my neighbours in town with spare horses, the condition of my health induced me to come up to Richmond, *by water*, for the settlement of old affairs.

At this period (February, 1790) came a request from general Knox, then secretary of war, under the orders of general Washington, to the governor and council of Virginia, to select the person they deemed to be most capable of giving such topographical additions to the existing maps as might enable the federal executive to know their country and provide for its defence. See governor Beverly Randolph's letters to me in my files.

Unfortunately for me, general Washington's wish being always my law, I entered upon this arduous task without hesitation, contract, or arrangement. I was countenanced by the honourable the executive of Virginia—had access to all the public archives of the state, apartments in the capitol, and every aid, but money, from all the departments of government.

After employing many months, with several assistants, transcribing records in the capitol, &c. it was discovered that every map and geographical production of the country was so radically erroneous, that the requisition of the federal administration could not be complied with, without beginning and proceeding, *de novo*, on a map of the southern states; and while the public correspondence was carried on, during an interrupting indisposition of general Washington, I compiled for their temporary relief my *Analysis of Virginia*, which general Knox caused to be printed in Philadelphia, reserving to me a copy right, for political reasons.

Before a definitive answer was procured from the war office, I had completed about two thirds of my map of the southern states, on both a small and a large scale; but, alas! when the federal government deemed my ideas too comprehensive to be carried into effect, I was left without money, considerably involved in debts, my honour forbade me to evade, and the gist of the question of responsibility between the two governments hurled the whole obligation on governor Randolph's personal estates; a circumstance of which no man of honest feelings would be base enough to avail himself.

In this dilemma, various projects were proposed, by subscription, &c. to enable me to proceed, and to persevere. My office continued open to all the views of administration, at my own expense, and the treasury being then very poor, the lottery law of 1791 was resorted to, as well to give me some prospect of remuneration for my services rendered and the debts incurred, as to encourage my perseverance to accomplish the views of government.

In 1792-3, I made two different journeys

to the western country, surveying and collecting surveys and other information, and completing the Tennessee, Kentucky, and Georgia frontiers, as herewith exhibited; but for want of wagonage at that period, my trunks of documents were six months delayed in the hands of my friend Mr. McGavock, at fort Chiswell.

At this time, I left an office fitted up at Knoxville, a similar one at Abingdon, and one on the eastern side of Shockoe creek, in the city of Richmond—all of them a dead loss to me.

In August, 1791, I set out in company and with the aid of my old revolutionary friend and compatriot, (col. Edward Carrington, of venerable memory,) to Fredericksburg; thence under his introductory letters, to Georgetown and Washington, Columbia: we parted at Fredericksburg, alas! to meet no more in this world.

Georgetown being then the only populated part of Columbia, I fixed an office in the house of Messrs. Bowman & Co. of Baltimore, made all possible progress in collecting materials and doing public good, and advanced to Baltimore in face of the yellow fever.

The violence of the yellow fever then raging in Baltimore, put a stop to all friendly arrangements which had been preparatorily made for me with an engraver in that place. I went to Philadelphia, established an office in the house of Mr. Charles Young, in Chestnut street, and negotiated with Messrs. Thackara and Vallance, the only competent engravers then in that place, but who were previously engaged on Griffith's map of Maryland, which delayed them longer than they expected, and too long for me to wait without resources. In New York I found no engraver in the map line. In Philadelphia I made considerable acquisitions of topographical materials; and after becoming acquainted with the Spanish minister, (Don Joseph Jandannes, who had married Miss Stoughton, of Boston,) he suggested the probability that Lopez, in Madrid, who was bred an engraver in London, might be disengaged, and that he had a strong desire that my maps should be engraven in the capital of his native country, and the two nations become more intimately known to each other, and bound in the reciprocal interests of commerce. Ultimately, he very liberally furnished me with letters of introduction and credit to his family in Madrid, about court, his private purse, and passports; but, on my arrival in Madrid, I found Lopez and his whole force so occupied, on extensive and important works for the king, that he could not touch the subject.

From Madrid, I went to England in August, 1796, all which may be verified by my passports. I exerted myself in London till autumn, 1800, trying the whole time, (as will be seen by every year's correspondence in the files,) supporting myself by my industry as an author and civil engineer, to effect our purpose against Mr. Pitt's violent opposition

to our country's prosperity, and struggling with difficulties which compelled me to use my hereditary resources.

While in London I continually conferred with our ministers, King and Monroe; I made two contracts to complete the geography of North America in connexion with an American house, buying out Mr. Arrowsmith, and engaging him, generally, in our service: this was lost by the failure of that house, in consequence of a few days stoppage of the bank of England. The second contract was with Mr. Fairburn, and with Mr. Adkins, (the second topographical draftsman in Europe,) who had engaged to prepare the whole general and detail maps of North America for the plates. This promising young man was killed by a stroke of the sun, when working on my first map, exposed to the focal heat of a full sun window.

The materials accumulated in England, &c. exceed all probable conception, and can only be examined at the house I am compelled to keep; six rooms having long been necessary to display the contents of my accumulation, bearing me down with unavoidable expense.

I left London in October, 1801, under President Monroe's passport and letter of approbation. In 1806 I was appointed first commissioner of the United States on the survey of the coast of North Carolina; and have since expended, in surveying and investigating our maritime frontier, about seven years of my time, and five thousand dollars.

During the late war, myself, and access to my documents, were detained and attached to the war office: It was distinguished by the new arrangement of the army, and I have ever since been borne down by loads of expense too heavy for one to bear without income.

I have, in the topographical branch office alone, manuscripts of all the countries between our Atlantic and Pacific coasts, including Mexico.

The worst is, that while thus perseveringly attached to the public service, many of my lands, &c. have been intruded on, and wasted by frauds.

In the revolutionary war I drew one hunting shirt only, when naked, on Indian service. I have received no military lands or pay, but am overwhelmed with debt, wounds, and pains, and have nothing but the product of the lottery law to rescue me and my suffering family from begging in the street.

I am, dear sir, your grateful servant,

WM. TATHAM.

February 8, 1819.

The legislature passed the lottery law, which colonel Tatham asked for, but a few days before his death.

*To the Editor of the Richmond Compiler.*

The following is a copy of a letter from the "friend of man and learning,"

Mr. J. Lancaster, to the Hon. Burwell Bassett, on receiving the resolution admitting him to a seat on the floor of Congress Hall; a motion introduced by Mr. B. Bassett with delicacy of feeling, goodness of heart, and unanimously accepted by that intelligent branch of the national legislature.

A compliment which introduces Mr. Lancaster in America, to an extensive sphere of usefulness, and leaves far as the lengthened shadow the solid substance, all the false glare of titled honour—all the empty praise of princes and deceitful courts, who in Shakspeare's portrait, "smile and smile and be a villain." The gratitude of every philanthropist is due to the Hon. B. Bassett, who on the floor of that house, rose and submitted the high but deserved compliment, to a man who had left his aged father, to extend a plan of education, calculated more effectually to diffuse the inestimable blessings of education.

*"To Burwell Bassett, a Representative from Virginia."*

"HONOURED FRIEND—How shall I express the feeling gratitude of an overflowing heart, when I perused thy speech and the vote of the House of Representatives yesterday respecting myself: I had no notion that my motives to action, my humble services in a great and righteous cause, would have been so highly honoured and appreciated. I receive it with feelings as deep as they will be lasting. When duty calls me to arduous exertion, it will be a stimulus to activity, a light on my path to cheer me on my way. I hail it as a mercy from Heaven, granting me a most honourable introduction to a great nation—a new call to duty—a powerful passport to usefulness. But there is one point of view in which it is to me a consolation, a joy, an honour, beyond all price, both in the thing done, as well as the time and manner of doing it.

"I have left in my own country, a venerable and benevolent father, a pious old man of seventy-five. I am his youngest son, the joy of his life, the consolation of his old age. On parting, he wept over me with tears of joy; he gave me up freely; he said, with a sorrowful accent, "Go, my dear son, God will bless thee; I rejoice that thou art going to be a

blessing to the children of another nation. The good will of him that dwelt in the bush be with thee." This honoured parent I am not likely to see any more, short of that mansion which he looks to as his own; an inheritance with the saints in light; a city that hath inhabitants, where God wipes all tears from his people's faces, and gives them joy unutterable, without end, without alloy.

"But the good wishes and the God of my father are with me, and the news of this honourable act of thine will reach him—will cheer his aged heart—will make his tears of joy to flow—will console perhaps his dying hours, and tune another song of praise for mercies past, which shall rise to the footstool of Omnipotence as grateful incense, and bring down from thence the blessings of Heaven on thy head.

"While the heart of the writer beats, thy name and gratitude will be the same word, mean the same thing in my mind. May he who first loved little children, called them and blessed them, remember thy kindness to me *as their friends*, and reward with his love thy goodness to thy respectful friend,

(Signed) "JOSEPH LANCASTER.

"P. S.—I am rather overdone, but mean to be in the House at 10 o'clock or near, for a short time.

"Washington, 1st mo. 27, 1819."

### EAST FLORIDA.

*Historical Notices.—From Ellicott's Journal; published in 1814.*

The discovery of East Florida is generally attributed to Juan Ponce de Leon, in 1512; but it is probable, the eastern coast was discovered, about fifteen years before that time, by Sebastian Cabot. After the coast of East Florida had been discovered by Juan Ponce de Leon, the country was visited by a number of adventurers; but the first patent was obtained by Francis de Geray, who did not live to take possession of the province. Francis de Geray was succeeded by Luke V. de Allegon, who visited Florida about the year 1524, and was succeeded by Pamphilo de Naryaez, in 1528 or 1529, who died on the coast, and was succeed-

ed by that celebrated adventurer, Ferdinando de Soto, who traversed both the Floridas and part of our western country, from the year 1539 to 1542, and died at the forks of the Red river, or, as some writers state, on the Mississippi. The first permanent settlement in East Florida was attempted, by some French protestants, in the year 1562, to secure to themselves a retreat from religious persecution. But, as soon as the king of Spain received an account of the commencement of this infant settlement, he despatched Don Pedro Matendez de Aviles into East Florida, with a considerable force, to destroy it; which he effected, in a most cruel and barbarous manner, in the year 1565, and established a colony at St. Augustine. For this service, it appears that Martendez obtained a grant for all Florida, which grant included the whole coast on the Gulf of Mexico, and *as far north and east as Newfoundland*, to which was added a number of privileges, for which he was to perform some signal services; one was, to make a chart of the coast of Florida, for the use of the Spanish navigators who visited those seas; but this service was never performed, nor does it appear that any measures were taken for that purpose until about 1718, when Don Gonzalez Carrenza, the principal pilot of the Spanish *flota*, undertook it; but his observations remained in manuscript, and were little known, until published in London, in the year 1740; they are, however, very imperfect. In 1586, St. Augustine, the capital of the province, was taken and pillaged by Sir Francis Drake; and, in 1665, it was again taken and plundered by captain Davis, who headed and commanded a company of buccaneers. In 1702, an expedition was carried on against it by colonel Moore, governor of Carolina; his force consisted of 500 English troops and 700 Indians, with whom he besieged the city for three months, without success, and then retired. Except those incidents, the history of East Florida, from the settling of the colony, in 1565, is little more than a succession of governors, until general Oglethorpe took possession of Georgia, which circumstance excited considerable jealousy at the court of Madrid, and a large force was sent against him, which he not only defeated,

but after various encounters, carried his conquests to the gates of St. Augustine, and laid siege to that city in 1740; but, being badly supplied with almost every article necessary to give success to such an undertaking, he was obliged to relinquish his design.

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### WEST FLORIDA.

*Extract from Ellicott's Journal, published in 1814.*

Although West Florida is but of little importance when considered alone, and unconnected with the country north of it, it is of immense consequence when viewed as possessing all the avenues of commerce, to and from a large productive country. A country extending north from the thirty-first degree of north latitude to the sources of the *Pearl, Pascagota, Tombecby, Alabama, Conecah, Chattachocha, and Flint* rivers, and at least *three hundred* miles from east to west. The coast of this province abounds in *live oak* and *red cedar*, in considerable abundance, fit for *ship building*, which is not to be met with north of the boundary. From the safety of the coast of this province, added to the great number of harbours proper for coasting vessels; that of *Pensacola*, into which a fleet may sail, and ride with safety, and that of *St. Joseph's*, into which vessels not drawing more than seventeen feet water may sail at all times; it must be highly important in a commercial point of view, and, if connected with the country north of it, capable of prescribing maritime regulations to the Gulf of Mexico.

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[From the Norfolk Herald.]

#### THE NAVAL DEPOT.

We have it from an unofficial source, one in which we can, nevertheless, place confidence, that the navy commissioners have combined in the establishment of a grand naval depot for the southern section of the union, two distinct sites—Gosport as a fitting, repairing and docking yard; and Burrill's Bay as the building yard. The latter place is in the county of Isle of Wight, on the south side of James river, five or six miles below Jamestown, and about 30 miles dis-

tant from Norfolk; it heads the long bar which extends from the Warwick shore, familiarly called the Point of Shoal, around which the channel of the river winds its course. From the bay of Hampton roads is almost a straight course, and the depth of water is sufficient for ships of the largest draft. At every point where it may be necessary to erect works of defence, nature has provided a foundation of solid rock, and the entrance may be so fortified as to render it impassable to an enemy. We presume, however, that no public work will be commenced there until after the next session of Congress, when the report of the commissioners shall have been acted on by that body.

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[From the Union.]

#### ANECDOTES RESPECTING PRINTING.

We are informed that at the first invention of the art, great secrecy was observed, which indeed was carried to an extraordinary excess. The individuals employed in the mechanical offices of the art, were solemnly sworn to secrecy, the types were deposited in sealed bags, given out in the work shops as they were immediately wanted, and carefully carried back again by the master.

In most of the early printed books, initial letters were not printed; but spaces were left for them to be filled up by those to whose profession it immediately belonged, and who were termed *minators*. The motive was still the same, namely, that the books might have the appearance of manuscripts. The initial letters in manuscripts were usually ornamented. Hence they were adopted in the first Psalter; but omitted in subsequent books by the same printers, probably on account of the difficulty and inconvenience which attended the cutting them on blocks, and the subsequent insertion of them in the form. They were afterwards renewed in some few books; but they did not come into general use till the beginning of the 16th century. The ink used by the first printers in Germany and Italy, was of such extraordinary brightness and beauty as to exceed all attempts of modern times. The secret has been entirely lost.

The catchword was called *custos*, and

properly enough, as the guardian of the leaf. The use and importance of this to the printer was so exceedingly obvious, that the use of the catchword commenced at a very early period. It first appeared in the Tacitus, printed by John de Spira, at Venice, about 1469.

It is a little singular, that the use and convenience of the catchword did not occur to the Paris printers till a very late period. According to Chivillier, it was not used at Paris till the year 1520.

The pages were first numbered in 1477, in a book entitled "*In Sermonibus Leon de Utino*." These generally, as at present, were placed at the top of the page, though Thomas Anshelmus, in his edition of Hesychius published in 1520, placed the ciphers at the bottom and recommended this practice in his preface. The custom of numbering the pages was not at all popular, and did not come into general use before the end of the fifteenth century.

The characters first used in printing were the Gothic, afterwards the Roman, and the Italic character was introduced by Aldus Minutius.

The first book in which errata were published, was a Juvenal, printed at Venice, in 1478, with the notes of Merula, by Gabrielus Petrus. In this book the errata occupy two entire pages.

An article from Hanover of the 18th of Dec. announces that the Assembly of the States had abolished the torture in criminal examinations; and that it was expected the trial by jury would be adopted.

#### QUEBECK.

By a census lately taken, it appears that the city of Quebeck contains 15,257 inhabitants; 11,991 of whom are Catholics, and 3266 Protestants.

#### *A New Application of Steam.*

We hear that a patent has been taken out in the city of Washington to apply steam, in the place of gunpowder to propel balls, &c. from cannon, &c. We are assured that much confidence is reposed in this discovery, and much expectation is excited as to the effects to be produced by this new application of steam.

[Dem. Press.]

We are informed that Isaac W. Crane, esq. of Trenton, is engaged in writing a history of New Jersey. [Centinel.]

In the account of the disposition of the property of the late queen of England, we observe the following notice:

"Five of the horses were shot on account of their age, being between thirty and forty years, to prevent their falling to the work of dust carts, &c."

The expense of supporting a few years longer these veteran servants, has been ill saved by such an act of inhumanity. It appears that the executors thought of no alternative but killing or selling them.

Office of the Federal Republican and Baltimore Telegraph, Wednesday, March 10.

Captain Coiett arrived here in 17 days from Aux Cayes, informs that all general McGregor's troops had deserted him at Aux Cayes, owing to the want of funds for their subsistence.

#### DETROIT.

A committee, appointed for the purpose, has lately published a report giving a statistical view of the city of Detroit. According to this report, it is situated in north latitude 42 deg. 25 min. on the north-west bank of the river Detroit, nine miles distant from Lake St. Clair, and 18 miles from Lake Erie. The present population, exclusive of the garrison, is 1110: of whom 596 are white males, 444 females, and 70 free people of colour. The buildings are 142 dwelling houses, and 131 stores and shops, and public buildings, of which 51 were erected during the past year. There are two catholic and one protestant clergymen, 12 attorneys at law, 3 physicians and surgeons, 5 instructors of the English, French, and learned languages, 170 scholars, and 174 mechanics. The value of exports during the past year was \$69,330—Imports, \$15,611.

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